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National Headquarters

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COLONEL WILLIAM H. PIETSCH, JR.
UNITED STATES ARMY, RETIRED

Colonel William H. Pietsch, Jr., a Vietnam combat veteran with worldwide military experience as a Civil Affairs Staff Officer and troop commander is now serving as Chairman of the Civil Preparedness Committee of the Reserve Officers Association.

From 1970 to 1973 Colonel Pietsch served in the Office of the Secretary of the Army and in the Office of the Secretary of Defense as Military Advisor to the National Director of Civil Preparedness. In this capacity he served as a point of contact with the Military Services, with US civilian agencies at federal, state, county, and municipal level, and with the General Public. Colonel Pietsch reported for this top level Department of Defense assignment following service as the United States Defense Attache in Cambodia.

A 1943 graduate of West Point, Colonel Pietsch first served with airborne troops during World War II. Later, as a member of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), he parachuted into occupied France where he worked with French Forces of the Interior to liberate the Province of Burgundy from Nazi occupation.

Following World War II, he was a student and then instructor at the Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth Kansas. From 1947 to 1951, he undertook foreign area specialist training at the Army, Language School, Stanford University, Columbia University, and the U.S. Army Institute for Advanced Russian and East European Studies. Following this training, he served overseas as a language and area specialist. During the "cold war" period he saw duty in more than 25 foreign countries including the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellites.

After a year as a battalion commander in the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Colonel Pietsch served in Europe as Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2 (Intelligence) of Berlin Command. In 1960, he returned to the Pentagon as Chief of U.S. Army Defensive Security.

In 1961, Colonel Pietsch relinquished his commission to join the Programs Evaluation Office in Laos. When the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group was established in that country, he was ordered back into uniform as Senior Military Intelligence Advisor to the Royal Lao Government.

Returning from Laos in 1962, he held several Pentagon posts in the areas of civil-military operations, special warfare, and foreign assistance. In June 1962, he accompanied the U.S. Army Chief of Staff on his counterinsurgency mission to Vietnam, Thailand, and other areas of Southeast Asia.

In 1965, he was awarded a Master of Arts degree in Journalism and Communication Research by Stanford University. He then served as Public Affairs Officer of the Seventh Army in Germany during the period of time U.S. Forces were withdrawing from bases in France and consolidating their units in Germany.

In 1967 he returned to Vietnam for duty with the U.S. Army's II Field Force, serving consecutively as Inspector General, Assistant Chief of Staff for Revolutionary Development, and then as Assistant Chief of Staff, G-5 (Civil Affairs). During this period he founded and directed "Operation Friendship", a program designed to encourage the Vietnamese people to rally to the cause of freedom through military support for civil authority and self-defense efforts. This program is now sponsored by the Vietnamese Government.

For his service in Southeast Asia, Colonel Pietsch has been awarded the Vietnamese Medal of Honor, the Cross of Gallantry with Gold Star, the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star with "V" for valor, four Air Medals, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Vietnam Campaign Medal with three bronze stars, and the Vietnamese Service Medal. He has also received several other medals from the United States, England, and France for services rendered during World War II.

Colonel Pietsch is a Life Member of the Reserve Officers Association.